



## Drug Abuse in Children/Teens

Substance abuse is a serious problem that can negatively affect the health and well being of your child. This is especially dangerous for children who do not have the social skills or experience to deal with certain issues. Detecting the use of drugs and alcohol in a child can be problematic and complicated, but it is always better to be safe than sorry.

Many parents are in denial about the possibility or likelihood that their kids drink or do drugs. Taking a “not my kid” approach could hold serious consequences for the child. As undesirable as it may be, many kids and teens try alcohol and drugs during their high school and college careers. Educate yourself and educate your kids. Make it a priority to stay informed about the pressures and dangers facing our youth today.

## Symptoms

- Low grades or poor school achievement
- Hostile, defiant behavior
- Tendency to be influenced excessively by peers
- Lack of adequate support or supervision
- History of behavior problems
- History of drug use by siblings or friends

## Statistics

- Studies show children and teens are more likely to try alcohol or drugs during the summer months.
- The average age for a child to first experiment with drugs or alcohol is age 11.
- The two biggest risk factors that parents should be aware of are peer pressure and low self-esteem.
- Research has demonstrated that individuals who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking at age 21.
- Research has proven that youth substance abuse prevention programs are effective in decreasing substance abuse.

- Studies show that 16 percent of youth ages 12 to 18 reported drinking alcohol at least once a month in 2003.
- In 2003, 26 percent of high school students reported to have tried alcohol or drugs at least once during a one-year period.

### Tips

- Talk to your kids. Good communication is key to maintaining a positive relationship.
- Try to make a point of having a conversation with your son or daughter each day.
- Get involved. It has been proven that youth are less likely to have substance abuse problems when they have a positive relationship with adults.
- Set ground rules. Make sensible rules about homework, social activities, etc. and stick to them.
- Be a role model. Set a good example for your child. Be someone they can look up to.

**ADAMH is your community safety net. If you or someone you love needs help call 276-CARE, the front door to the ADAMH system of care.**